

## THE PATIENCE OF HOPE.

The world's as full of hope as heav'n of stars,  
 And so take heart to scan life's cloudy bars,  
 Out of the East spring dawn and day's delight,  
 The lark's sweet treble and the shadow's flight  
 There's hope in the dull earth, though now it lies  
 Heavy upon the snowdrop's closed eyes;  
 Warm sun-bone breathing through the kindly mould  
 Shall all her hidden loveliness unfold;  
 And each shy bird upon her leafy nest,  
 Feedeth with hope the love within her breast,  
 Watching in patience through the growing days,  
 While for the joy to come her mate gives praise.  
 Trees in their wintry arms entold the spring,  
 Though long we wait to hear the black-birds sing;  
 Grey skies will brighten, and the bold buds show  
 Green smiling faces to the tardy snow.  
 Unto the patient heart God sendeth too  
 Songs sweeter than a lark's; the morning dew;  
 Beams brighter than on waking flowers fall;  
 Spring after winter;—Heaven after all.  
 —M. Henderson, in "The Day of Rest."

## FOR LIFE

## A STORY OF LONDON EXPERIENCE

## PART III.—THE DOOMED LIFE.

About two years after the incident last recorded, I was returning in the middle of a cold but not dark winter night, from the house of a patient who resided in the outskirts of our town. My way lay across some fields, and through a low suburb by the banks of the river. When I came to the last field I thought I saw some one crouched down by the stone wall that formed the boundary. Unheard, I drew near, and saw it was a woman, watching apparently the lights of a neighbouring public-house, noted as the rendezvous of the worst characters. I seemed instinctively to know that it was some wife, watching for her husband; and as I passed I said, "Go home, my good woman. This bitter night it is enough to kill you to be watching about in this bleak place."

A voice with despair in its tone quietly replied, "Nothing will kill me; or I should have been dead long ago." There was a sort of laugh—a hollow ghost of a laugh—that chilled me to the bone, as the words ceased. Suddenly a throng of people, some women, came out of the public-house, and the crouched form rose and glided along at the side of the wall. I passed the rabble who were shouting out ribald songs, wild, odious, joyless laughter of women's voices adding a sort of chorus to the strain. I saw a tall man among them, a large tawdry woman was clinging to his arm. The light of the lamp was on his face—it was Warner. I glanced at his companion, and my mental comment was—"If that poor girl you once called wife is dead, the virago on your arm is better suited to you." I hastened on, anxious to put as wide a distance between me and a creature I could not look on without loathing; but for some streets I heard the shouts of the revelers, rending with their foul cries the quiet of the night.

Next day there were rumours of a murder, one of the worst of murders, a murder called of old, and still in our law books named "TREASON!" A wife had murdered her husband in their own home. This wretched, guilty creature had shed her husband's blood on the very hearth that ought to have been sacred to love and fidelity. Men looked calmly stern, women bitterly enraged as the tidings of this murder spread.

I was no reader of newspaper horrors, but when such a crime came nearly to one's own door, I turned more eagerly than usual to the local journal laid on my breakfast-table the following day, and the first thing that startled me was the name—Warner. For a moment I thought of the woman I had seen hanging on Warner's arm, and a kind of stern contempt filled my mind. "A drunken brawl: no wonder he ended so," was my mental comment. But as I read, what was my surprise to find it was *Ann*, the "Annie" I remembered—the gentle, loving wife and mother, whose sweetness of temper had been the drunken boast of her husband. How could it be possible?

The murder took place so near the time of the assizes, that the trial followed the inquest and the committal in quick succession. There was no one to urge delay for the procuring of evidence or the arranging of the defence. The evidence was clear, the accused was poor. I attended the trial. The court was very full—many ladies there, most of them vehemently against the prisoner. Oh, ladies! if you obtained what some of you deem your right—permission equally with man to practise law—few of you would prefer being tried by a female judge or a female jury. It is a wrong, say some, that woman is not tried by her peers—that trial by jury in its strict sense does not exist for her. If this be a wrong, methinks woman would cherish this wrong more than most of her rights.

The prisoner was poorly dressed. She had evidently, though still young in years, lost all care for her appearance despair had done its work. She looked once timidly and wonderingly round the court, then collapsed into herself, a still, white effigy of a woman.

How much of the proceedings were understood by her can never be known. Occasionally her fingers twitched at her old shawl, once she pressed her little bony hands hard on her eyes. I felt certain those tearless eyes were dry and hot, that she pressed down the lids to ease them; but those around me said, "What a hardened creature!" All the whispers I heard, and they were in female voices, "soft in the vowels," were—"What stolid indifference!" "There's no tears; she puts up her hands to her eyes to pretend to wipe away the tears she does not shed." "Faugh! I cannot bear to look at her hands." "What a bad countenance!" "Wasted to the bone with evil passion!" &c.

There was no hesitancy and no delay in the trial: all was clear. The husband had returned home late, intoxicated certainly; but this wretched woman, this base wife, had waylaid him—managed to enter the cottage they occupied a few minutes before him: he followed and fell down across the fire-place, and she had thrown a heavy smoothing-iron on his temple as he lay, and killed him instantly.

There was a feeble attempt by the counsel for the prisoner to make out that the fall might have caused death. The surgeon's testimony entirely disproved that. There was a wound inflicted with the strange weapon employed; "not so deep as a well, nor so broad as a church door; but enough."

Except the man's fall no sound had been heard by the other lodgers in the house, and the tragedy was discovered by a woman noticing a small stream of blood that had run under the door into the passage. She had entered and found the man dead and cold, and the murderess crouched up in a corner of the room, looking "calmly," they said, at her fearful work.

And so there was no doubt: the word "GUILTY" was spoken with less sorrow than common; and in the court there was a murmur—could it be of approval?

Yes! human justice was satisfied—the traitress was condemned.

After the thrill of the moment, I was not either angry or surprised at that approving murmur. It was outraged fidelity that spoke. Marriage—honorable, tender, holy—had been violated by the red hand of murder: the ties dear as life, strong as death, had been rent in twain, and society rose indignant to avenge the crime. Sentence was pronounced. There was the same stillness in the prisoner. The goaler touched her. She started like one awakened from a dream, and her frame being light and small, she stepped down quickly. With deep disgust a voice near me said—"She actually seems to 'trip' away!"

I went home fevered with the scene. I had looked below the surface; I had known the daily death that miserable woman had endured—the many murders her intemperate husband had perpetrated; how he had slain her hopes, her health, her peace, her mother joy, her wifely comfort. Yet that her hand should have dealt the awful retributive blow seemed very frightful.

I pondered, too, on human law, and mourned that it should be most insecure where for the safety of society it should be least so. All whom I conversed with believed the extreme penalty of the law would be inflicted. All thought it just it should be. I urged the conduct of the husband, and was, I confess, startled at the reply; "Oh! allow a man's bad conduct to be pleaded in extenuation, and you'll have plenty of murders." Pondering this case, my mind went through a ghastly chronicle. "The glorious uncertainty of the law" does not cease with the verdict, it extends to the punishment. I remembered that a man, a few years back, destroyed a woman on Battersea Bridge—a most hideous murder: no doubt, and no extenuation in the case, and yet that man was reprieved. A Frenchwoman deliberately bought a pistol and shot a mere youth, her paramour; and her life was spared. An adulteress, discovered in her amours, put her four young children to death, and the plea of insanity was allowed. A mother deliberately brings her child of ten years old to her home and cruelly murders it, making the name of "Celestine" infernal for ever, and she was spared. A poor ill-used woman, in one of our southern counties, waits up for a brutal husband, who returns, reeking from the arms of a paramour, to insult his wife; in a paroxysm of frenzy she strikes him with a hatchet that lay at the fireside, no premeditation and the greatest provocation. In her terror she makes a bungling effort to conceal her guilt—and she perished on the scaffold!

And, more terrible still, timid or merciful jurors have allowed murderers—yes! many to escape, whom, had the penalty been less than death, they would surely have convicted. As I thought of these strange anomalies in our social system, I wished two things—that some lawyer with a sound brain and heart would make a list of crimes and punishments for one year, tabulate and compare the sentences, and send such a paper to the Social Science meeting. My other wish was, that human justice would, for the security of society, try whether a life of stern toil would not be a more deterring punishment than a death of excitement to those who by their crimes show they have no love of man nor fear of God. But I found few to comprehend or sympathize with me, and I looked with a sickening horror to the close of Annie Warner's "doomed life." \* \*

## PART IV.—THE INNER LIFE.

While I was thus revolving this sad case in my mind, my medical colleague asked me to visit the infirmary of the

county gaol. I found there, in a separate ward under the care of two nurses, the unhappy woman whose trial (I may say *trials*) I had witnessed. I had hoped to find her insane. I wished to think the deed she had perpetrated was the result of insanity; but she was perfectly calm and collected. The nervous system was entirely prostrated as if a long series of exhausting troubles, ending in a paroxysm of rage, had completely shattered the system. All that skill could do was done by myself and others to save her; for it was not to be endured that leath should anticipate his prey and deprive the gaping multitude of a drama and a holiday. And so strange in some cases is the tenacity of life, that I have known some feeble wretch with disease enough to kill the strong at once, live on and on, as if merely to meet man's doom—nature delaying that law might strike. I did fear this might be Annie Warner's case. She was patched up with stimulants, fed up with dainties; and for a few days she evidently rallied. Food and quiet that she had been long a stranger to wrought some favorable effects; but she never slept. Day by day, night by night, she lay still and calm, but sleepless. I visited her at all hours. She seldom spoke except in monosyllables, and occasionally faltered the *one* name—JESUS. I recalled myself to her recollection. From that time she appeared to take some interest in my coming: the chaplain she seemed to shrink from. One night, wishing to watch the effect of a narcotic, I remained with her. The medicine we tried failed as a sedative, and I was not, therefore, surprised that its operation as a stimulant was very marked. For the first time since her sentence she began to converse. There was no question of confession; she had never (except in the usual legal form at the trial) denied her guilt. I wished to know if there was contrition.

"My Archy," she said, "my little Annie, do you see your poor mother! Oh! shall I reach you, my murdered babies? "Sir," she added, "do not cold, and hunger, and blows, and bitter words that scald the heart—do not they kill? No, no! they did not kill me—they hurt you, my darlings, they killed you! My heart was so hard it would not break; I wish it had—oh! I wish it had!" I tried to lead her to a consideration of her circumstances. She said, with a heavy sigh, as if speaking to her husband, "Oh, dear Fred! my poor fellow! it was the drink—yes, yes—that made a lake of fire, a river of blood between us. Who shed that blood?" she exclaimed, sitting upright, with sudden energy, and looking wildly round. Then dropping her head on her clasped hands she added, "Good people, pray for me; the old man with the grave, stern face said, 'The Lord have mercy on your soul!' that was a prayer, wasn't it? Mercy—mercy for me! Oh! there has been no mercy! Husband, have mercy! Pity your children—our Archy, our Annie—have mercy on them! No! there is no mercy here; the Lord have mercy, have mercy!" Her voice rose into a thin scream; she seemed to lose control over it; the one word "Mercy! mercy!" came in sharp gasps. I saw she was convulsed; we laid her down, but the struggle had commenced with the last enemy. Sorely the wasted frame was torn and shaken for hours ere the drops of suffering were fully wrung out, and the prisoner was released. The struggling soul went with its plea for mercy to a higher tribunal; all stained and soiled with its wretched strife of existence, it carries its sins and sorrows to Him who alone knows the hidden anguish—"the inner life."

Oh woman! so tender in love, so patient in endurance, so sublime in